

Indian duo leads charge past Rockets

By **Chris Siers**
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CROSS PLAINS — A handful of shock plays from their star players allowed East Robertson to knock off the Forrest Rockets in Thursday night's non-region matchup.

The Indians (8-1) scored three touchdowns from 59, 72 and 80 yards to pull away for the 35-14 win over Forrest.

The Rockets (3-6) had chances to match the Indians' production on the scoreboard, but three scoreless trips inside the red zone ultimately proved costly in the loss.

"Our kids played hard. We have to put it in the end zone when get down there. We came out slow after that opening kickoff, but they responded in the second half. They had a character check at halftime and they came out in the second half and left it all on the field," Rocket coach Eli Stephenson said.

The Indians got on the board early and never let off the throttle after the speedy Zech Prince returned the game's opening kickoff 95 yards to put the home team up 7-0 following the successful kick after.

Forrest answered in short order with a steady mix of Liam Bell, Tayton Swift and Chris Davis pushed well into Indian territory.

But the seven-play drive eventually stalled after three-straight negative plays backed Forrest up to fourth and long.

After both teams were unable to score through the remainder of the quarter, Forrest again found itself on fourth down from the 11-yard

line, where the Rockets attempted a field goal try, but the kick was blocked by East Robertson.

On the following play, Prince found a crease and streaked 80 yards to the end zone, bumping the Indians' advantage to 14-0.

After forcing a Rocket punt on the next possession, East Robertson struck again on another huge play, this time coming from Isiah Groves on a 59-yard run, giving the Indians a 21-0 advantage with 7:21 left in the half.

"They're athletic all over the field. They have kids that can really run," Stephenson said.

The Rockets again answered and moved the ball well on the Indian defense and this time, capped the 6:10 minute, 12-play drive with a one-yard quarterback sneak by freshman Ryan Hill to put the Rockets on the board.

Having seemingly captured the game's momentum, the quick-striking East Robertson offense went into hurry up mode and found the end zone with 15 seconds left on the clock when quarterback Collin Cook lofted a touch pass to the corner pylon to give the home team a 28-7 lead at the half.

The Rockets opened the second half with another clock-draining drive that Bell capped on a two-yard score with 6:28, cutting the lead to 14 points after Gavin Grissom's successful kick after.

Stephenson opted for an on-side kick, which Forrest successfully recovered on the following kick off and as with their three previous drives, the Rockets were



Tribune Photos by Chris Siers
Senior tailback Tayon Swift guides his blockers on a big gain for Forrest on Thursday night at East Robertson. He finished with 110 yards on 20 carries for the Rockets.

able to move the ball well into Indian territory.

But a stop in the backfield on fourth and short forced a turnover on downs on the East Robertson 20-yard line.

Two plays later, Groves again found a crease and broke loose on a 72-yard touchdown run for the final score of the night.

The Rockets had a chance to cut into the Indian lead early in the fourth quarter, but three-straight penalties backed Forrest up from first and goal from the 10-yard line, to first and goal from the 25.

Forrest did press to the one-yard line, but a fourth-down, goal-line stand held the Rockets out.

The Indians did the bulk of their damage on shock plays courtesy of Groves and Prince.

Prince carried the ball 10 times for 162 yards and two touchdowns, including the 95-yard kickoff return.

Groves went for 165 yards on seven carries and two touchdowns as well.

In total, the Indians piled up 394 offensive yards with 352 coming

on the ground.

Forrest wasn't without its heavy hitters, though.

Senior tailback Tayton Swift had 110 yards on 20 carries, while Bell had 71 yards on 17 carries.

"With kids that come out and give you everything they have, you can't ask anything more from them," Stephenson said.

While mathematically not impossible, the Rockets still have a shot at a Class 2A playoff berth, if all the cards fall their way.

Forrest needs a win in Friday night's regular season finale at Mt. Pleasant, plus help from a few other teams as well.

"We have to go in and play our game. We still have a slim chance at the playoffs. We have to win, but we have to have some help from some other teams. They're going to come out and be ready to play Friday because that's the character of the kids," Stephenson said.

Kickoff is set for 7 p.m. at Mt. Pleasant.

Forrest	0	7	7	0	—	14
E. Robertson	7	21	7	0	—	35
First Quarter						
ER — Zech Prince	95	kickoff return,				



Liam Bell gives a fierce stiffarm and barrels forward for a 14-yard gain for the Rockets. He had 71 yards on 17 carries and a touchdown for Forrest.



Quarterback Ryan Hill peels out of the pocket and keeps his eyes downfield. He completed 4-of-7 attempts for 52 yards against the Indians.

(Jonathan Rosiles kick), 11:45.	ER — Elijah Groves	9	pass from Collin Cook, (Rosiles kick), 11:15.
Second Quarter			
ER — Prince	80	run, (Rosiles kick), 10:52.	
ER — Isiah Groves	59	run, (Rosiles kick), 7:21.	
F — Ryan Hill	1	run, (Gavin Grissom kick), 1:11.	

Third Quarter			
F — Liam Bell	2	run, (Grissom kick), 6:28.	
ER — I. Groves	72	run, (Rosiles kick), 2:37.	

Bulldogs shut out in finale

By **Dennis Holley**
Sports Writer

LYNCHBURG — The Cornersville Bulldogs (2-6, 2-3) with their playoff hopes dashed by Wayne County last Friday night travelled to Lynchburg to take on the Moore County Raiders (7-1, 3-1) for the final game of the 2022 football season.

The Bulldogs found no sympathy from the hometown Raiders as a disastrous first quarter in which Moore County scored four touchdowns to put the game beyond reach for Cornersville.

Cornersville was without junior running back and defensive end Ben Franklin who did not play due to an injured hip.

The Bulldogs managed only two first downs against Moore County.

Quarterback Blaine Woodard gained 20 yards for a first down late in the first quarter and Khi Canty, filling in for the injured Franklin, twisted and turned and refused to go down for a gain of 32 yards in the second quarter.

The game began with Moore County electing to receive and Cornersville's Joseth Palma booting the ball to the Raider 19-yard line where Moore County's Dawson White gathered the ball in and raced up past mid-field to the Bulldog 36-yard line before being brought down.

On first down, Moore County's Logan Hegwood took the hand-off from White headed off-tackle, broke through the Bulldog line, and headed for the end zone with a minute and one second gone in the first quarter and Blake Bradford booted the

extra point for the 7-0 Moore County lead.

Cornersville's Khi Canty received the following kickoff at the Bulldog 15-yard line and returned it to the 30-yard line.

The Bulldogs began play with Austin Cooper taking a Blaine Woodard handoff and trying the right side of the Raider line but was stopped with a three-yard loss.

An incomplete pass and Woodard's three-yard gain on third down brought up a fourth and 10 and Beau Schilig came in to punt.

Keller Morey signaled for a fair catch and the Raiders faced first and 10 at the Moore County 38-yard line.

White scrambled to avoid Bulldog tacklers, rolled out to his right and spied Morey along the sidelines and rifled a pass that the running back gathered in and outran the Cornersville defenders for a 62-yard touchdown.

A bad snap by Moore County followed and the Bulldogs dragged down the Raider kicker before he could convert the two-point conversion making the score, leaving the score at 13-0 with 9:21 left in the first quarter.

The Bulldogs again could not gain a first down and were forced to punt on fourth down, but disaster struck as Schilig's punt was blocked and was recovered at the Cornersville one-yard line.

From there White bulled into the end zone, but the two-point conversion was spoiled again by a bad snap and with 7:41 left in the first quarter Moore County led 19-0.

The Bulldogs' third possession again re-

sulted in a three and out with Schilig punting and Morey fielded the ball at the Raider 45 and returning it to the Cornersville 43-yard line where Cornersville's Austin King made the tackle.

A straight hand off sent Hegwood bursting up the middle and the Raider running back raced up field, outrunning the Bulldog defenders for a 43-yard touchdown.

Bradford booted the extra point and Moore County led, 26-0 with 5:47 left in the first quarter.

The Bulldogs offense sputtered and again Schilig punted with the Bulldogs finally getting something positive as the ball rolled to the Raider 38-yard line.

On first down Hegwood was corralled for a loss back at the Moore County 25 and the hole was too deep for the Raiders and they faced a fourth down and the resulting punt only rolled to the mid-field stripe.

Cooper ran for five yards on first down then on second down Woodard found an opening on the right side and rambled to the Moore County 25-yard line and the first, first down, in the game for Cornersville.

Cornersville could not regain the momentum and on fourth down Woodard's pass was knocked down by Moore County's Wes Clifton and the Raiders took over at their own 32-yard line.

On first down Hegwood broke through the Bulldog line and once again outran the Bulldog defenders for a 68-yard touchdown and with Bradford splitting the uprights the Raid-



Tribune Photo by Dennis Holley
Kale Adcox and Austin King combine to make a tackle for the Bulldogs.

ers upped their lead to 33-0 at the 10:47 mark of the second quarter.

The Bulldogs received the kick-off with King fielding the ball and being stopped at the Bulldog 20-yard line.

A Raider unsportsman like penalty on second down moved the ball to the Bulldog 38-yard line where on first down Khi Canty, displaying heart and determination, ran the ball to the Moore County 30-yard line for a 32-yard gain and a first down.

A holding penalty against the Bulldogs helped stall the drive and another Schilig punt set up Moore County at its own 23-yard line.

Three pass plays later at the Cornersville 23-yard line White found Alex Copeland in the end zone for a touchdown reception, again Bradford booted the PAT and with 5:08 left until halftime the Raiders led 40-0.

The Bulldogs could not move the ball and on fourth down the punt was partially blocked and the Raiders took over at the Bulldog 27-yard line and from there Hegwood raced to

the Bulldog 10-yard line and a first and goal.

Moore County's Isaiah Petty ran the ball in for a touchdown, but the kick after clanged off the left upright and the Raiders moved the lead to 46-0 with 2:00 until halftime.

The second half of the game saw Moore County playing the second stringers but Will Petty scored on a 15-yard run in the fourth quarter to complete the scoring and making the final margin.

Despite adversity the Bulldogs faced, from a new coach coming in late spring, an entirely new offensive and defensive line, and injuries to key players Riley Qualls, Mason Calahan, John Michael Jeter and finally Ben Franklin were just too much for Cornersville to overcome.

Regardless of the outcome the Bulldogs do have something to hold on to — Franklin totaled 920 yards and 10 touchdowns on 130 carries.

Woodard came into his own passing the ball after not being called upon to do so in his previous seasons.

Senior David Met-

calf on defense made his presence known in every game, and Canty grew as a dependable ball carrier this season.

Receivers Beau Schilig, Kale Adcox, and Austin King will be back next year.

A year of growth and maturity will help both the offensive and defensive lines next season.

"We definitely had a lot of adversity (wins and losses), but our kids never quit. We came out short-handed tonight, but they (team) came out and fought. Injuries took a toll on our team, but they never quit. We will begin Monday to build toward next year," Bulldog coach Shelby Waddell said after the game.

Cornersville	0	0	0	0	—	0
Moore Co.	26	26	0	7	—	53

First Quarter			
MC — Logan Hegwood	36	run, (Blake Bradford kick), 10:59.	
MC — Keller Morey	62	pass from Dawson White, (kick failed) 9:21.	
MC — White	1	run, (kick failed) 7:41.	
MC — Hegwood	43	run, (Bradford kick), 5:47.	
Second Quarter			
MC — Hegwood	68	run, (Bradford kick), 10:47.	
MC — Alex Copeland	23	pass from White, (Bradford kick), 5:08.	
MC — Isaiah Petty	9	run, (kick failed), 2:00.	
Fourth Quarter			
MC — Will Parker	15	run, (Bradford kick), 2:20.	